

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 1314

By Yarbro

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of legendary songwriter John Prine.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the untimely passing of John Prine, a singer-songwriter whose work chronicled the struggles and stories of everyday people and influenced countless songwriters and artists around the world; and

WHEREAS, a lyrical genius who wrote about the human experience in deftly composed vignettes of life in America that illustrated larger truths about our society, Mr. Prine composed an extraordinary body of Americana classics, including "Hello in There," "Sam Stone," "Paradise," and "Angel from Montgomery"; and

WHEREAS, John Prine was an author, actor, record-label owner, two-time Grammy winner, member of the Songwriters Hall of Fame and the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame, and a recipient of the 2016 PEN New England Song Lyrics of Literary Excellence Award; and

WHEREAS, born on October 10, 1946, John Prine was raised in the Chicago, Illinois, suburb of Maywood and grew up listening to the music of Buddy Holly, Johnny Cash, and Little Richard, along with the country music heroes of his father, Hank Williams, Sr., Ernest Tubb, and Roy Acuff; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Prine learned to play guitar from his brother, beginning with the songs from an early Carter Family record that his brother had given him and which helped inspire his first attempts at songwriting; and

WHEREAS, in 1963, he began taking guitar lessons at Chicago's Old Town School of Folk Music, and after graduating from high school in 1964, he worked as a mailman and

performed an occasional show at night on the side, never considering a full-time career in music; and

WHEREAS, drafted into military service in 1966, John Prine served in the United States Army during the Vietnam War and was stationed in Stuttgart, West Germany, assigned to duty as a mechanical engineer; and

WHEREAS, in late 1970, a tremendous review of one of his shows by critic Roger Ebert raised his star in the Chicago folk scene and eventually led to a record deal with Atlantic Records in 1971, after Mr. Prine performed a three-song spot during a Kris Kristofferson set at the Bottom Line in New York; and

WHEREAS, John Prine received a Grammy nomination as Best New Artist in 1972 on the strength of his debut record, *John Prine*, and saw his songs recorded by Bonnie Raitt, John Denver, Tanya Tucker, Bette Midler, the Everly Brothers, and many others as he released a number of albums in the 1970s; and

WHEREAS, in 1981, Mr. Prine launched his own record label, Oh Boy Records, and cut back on his own record releases while expanding his songwriting horizons with a variety of co-writers, including John Mellencamp, and collaborating with members of Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers on his 1991 album, *The Missing Years*, for which he received the Grammy for Best Contemporary Folk Album; and

WHEREAS, various serious health issues over the years saw him overcome lung cancer, have a cancerous tumor removed from his neck, and have a heart stent implanted while continuing to produce extraordinary records, including the 2005 Grammy-winner *Fair & Square*; 1999's *In Spite of Ourselves*, featuring duets on covers with such noted female artists as Iris DeMent, Patty Loveless, and Lucinda Williams; and a similar follow-up in 2016, *For Better, Or Worse*, with Iris DeMent, Miranda Lambert, Kacey Musgraves, and Morgane Stapleton; and

WHEREAS, an icon of the Americana music movement, John Prine released *The Tree of Forgiveness*, his first album of original material since *Fair & Square*, in 2018 and played a sold-out tour that was kicked off at New York's Radio City Music Hall. He was named the Americana Music Association's Artist of the Year and received a Lifetime Achievement Award at the Grammys in January 2020; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Prine passed away on April 7, 2020, at the age of seventy-three, due to complications from coronavirus; he is survived by his wife of twenty-four years, Fiona Whelan Prine, and their three children, Jack, Tommy, and Jody; and

WHEREAS, John Prine was one of the greatest American songwriters of all time; combining simplicity with emotional resonance, he crafted realistic portraits of the American experience, some enriching, some devastating, and he always displayed the courage of the true artist in looking in the mirror to discover the truth; and

WHEREAS, John Prine has left an indelible mark on subsequent artists and changed the face of modern American roots music; his words will truly live on for generations yet to come; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we celebrate the life of John Prine, even as we mourn his passing, and reflect fondly on his indelible legacy as one of the greatest and most enduring songwriters of all time.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to Mr. Prine's family, friends, and legion of fans.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy and upon proper request made to the appropriate clerk, the language appearing immediately following the State seal appear without House or Senate designation.